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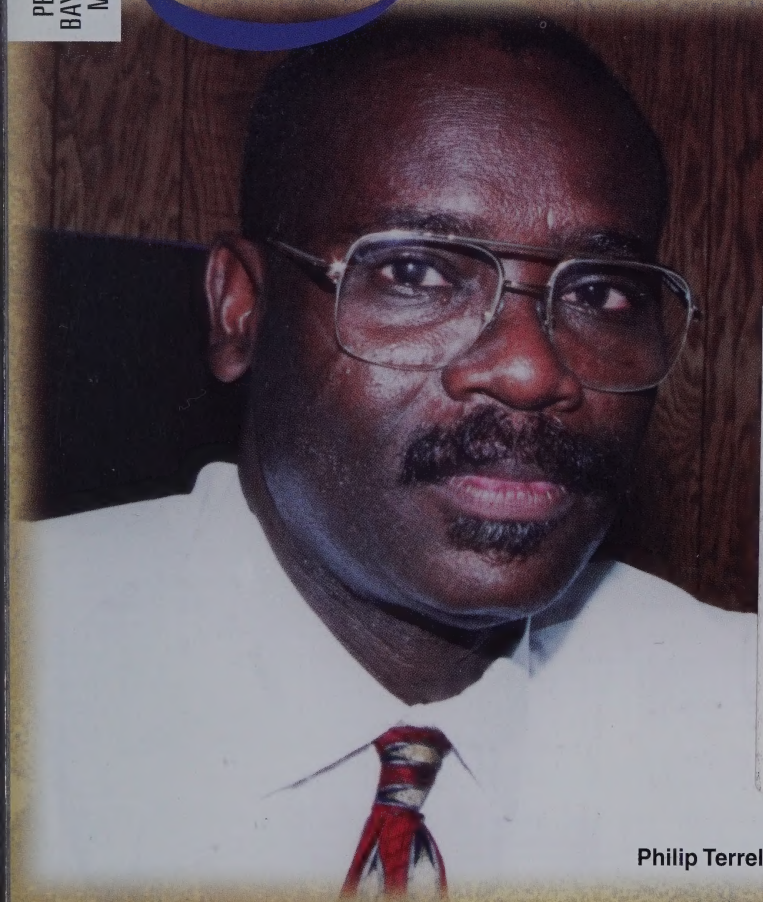

Philip Terrell, Ph.D.

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## Creating the Capacity for Success at Pass Christian Public Schools

## 'Success For All' Creates Successful Readers

## A Family of Educators

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MISSISSIPPI Star

VOL. 3 NO. 12 AUGUST 1999

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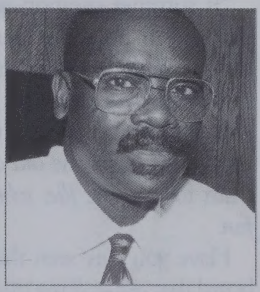

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# PUBLISHER'S PAGE

I have several thoughts I would like to share with you this month. Please bear with me.

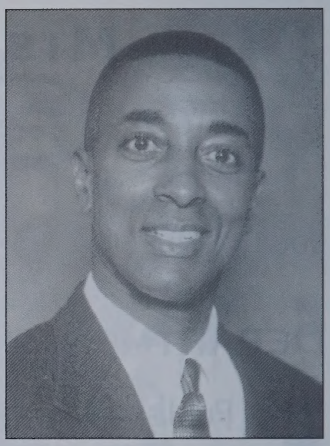
**Back To School**

"Is summer vacation over already?" is probably a question many school-aged children and some teachers have been asking themselves over the past couple of weeks. The past couple of months seemed to fly by. I guess the old cliché has some truth to it: *Time flies when you're having fun.*

Have you ever seen the poster or billboard that reads: *If you can read this, thank a teacher.* As a society, we owe teachers a whole lot more than they receive in terms of gratification and compensation. The compensation part appears to be improving, and all indications are that teacher salaries will get even better in the near future.

I wonder sometimes if the compensation part is growing faster the gratification part. I wonder if we as parents and uncles and aunts and big brothers and big sisters do all we can to support what teachers do. Do we read to our young children as often as we should? Do we take our children to the library every week or every other week? Do we buy them books? Or do we give books as gifts? Do we take a day off from work to volunteer to help teachers?

Maybe we do. Maybe we can do more. Let's try to do a little more this school year to lend support to these wonderful people who have given their lives to careers in education so that our children will grow up to become intelligent human beings.



*Maurice Singleton*

**What is the price of a vote?** Is it the sum of physical and emotional battle scars, lives lost in war and hundreds of years of a people being deprived of their right to vote because of the color of their skin?

If the second question comes anywhere close to answering the first one above, then I must share with you how disappointing it was to read the names of some of the people who didn't vote in the August 3rd primary election in my hometown of Bay St. Louis. There were lengthy printouts of the names of people who did not take advantage of their rights to go to the polls and express themselves as citizens of a democracy.

The lists included the names of clergy members, building contractors; former elected officials, educators and city officials. They came from various backgrounds and different social segments of the community. However, on August 3, they were all in the same category, the same club of "no-shows."

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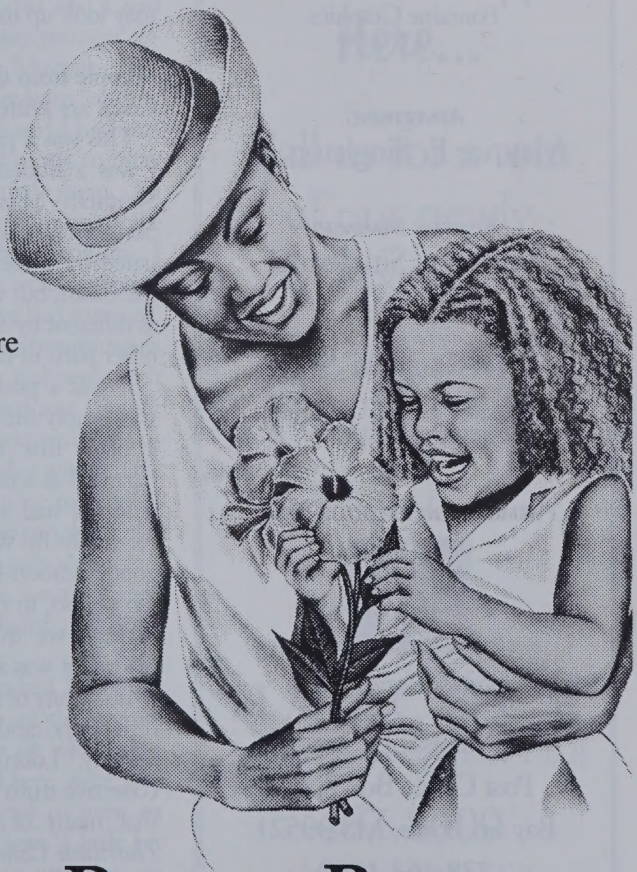

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**Mississippi Star**

Newsstand price:
**$2.00**
Annual subscription rate:
**$16.00**

*For subscriptions, back issues and advertising inquiries please contact:*

Mississippi Star
Post Office Box 2651
Bay St. Louis, MS 39521
228-463-1200

*Mississippi Star is a monthly magazine published by Star Magazine, Inc.*

With the availability of the absentee ballot, there is no excuse for not voting. Voting is a right and a privilege. Each and every one of us is entitled to the right to vote. And each of us makes a difference. Maybe the outcome of an election is not changed by one or two or three of our votes, but each of us still makes a difference. Each of us has influence on someone. If voting is not important to anyone of us, it may not be regarded as important to those who may look up to us.

**"People from the Coast are Different"**

This was a prevailing thought while I was a student at the University of Southern Mississippi in the 1970's. Some of it may have been self-perpetuated by those of us who were from the Coast, but we were also recognized as different by students who were from other parts of the state.

It was a positive thing. Some of it was simply the fact that we were from a place that had beaches and was regarded as a nice place to visit. Many students had spent time at Gulfside Assembly in Waveland and had very good vacation-like experiences on the Coast. So, to them, we were different because we lived in this wonderful place that was a great getaway.

But many of us heard that we "talked differently" and "carried ourselves differently." I don't know if there was any collective truth to this, but I do know that many of us had been through *Hurricane Camille* together. And I say together because *Camille* didn't pick and choose any particular neighborhood or any particular socio-economic class of people when she ravished her

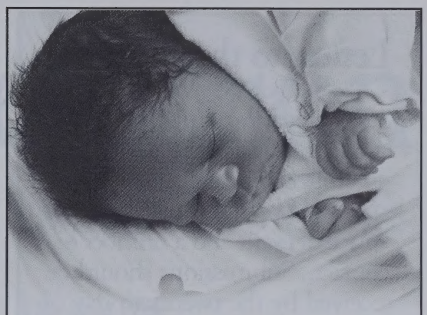
will on us thirty years ago. *Camille* affected all of us.

I wonder sometimes if an initiation or orientation by hurricane – *Camille* in particular – and the subsequent rebuilding of communities, has an effect on building the character of groups of people. And if not one particular hurricane, maybe the system of hurricanes over the years. I can remember people talking about the *"47 storm"*.

Before Camille, my dad and I had taken my mother and my younger sisters and brothers to Morgan City, Louisiana. They didn't learn until a week later that my dad and I had survived when I thumbed a ride to New Orleans and telephoned them. I'll never forget the joy in my mom's voice when she answered the telephone. I had no idea that they were worrying about whether or not we had survived.

Tragedy has its way of humbling us and making us deal in real ways with what we confront. *Hurricane Camille* certainly did that. I can remember people working together who would have otherwise never spent time together. I can remember business people in the community, who I had only seen wearing business suits prior, wearing jeans and tee shirts, getting their hands dirty, shoveling and cleaning.

*Hurricane Camille* reeked havoc on the Mississippi Gulf Coast thirty years ago, destroying much of what man had assembled here. There were also many lives lost. Many of us grew to appreciate our lives at least a little bit more. I certainly don't want to go through another hurricane, but I believe that I am different because I experienced *Hurricane Camille*.

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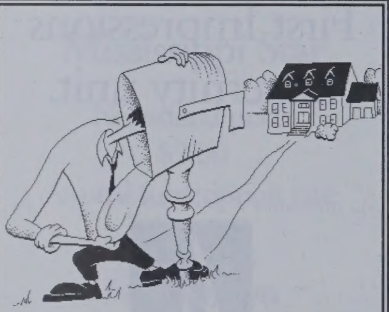
## Letters to the Publisher

should be 100 words or less.
**Star Calendar:** Events of interest to South Mississippians should be submitted on your organization's letterhead, specifying the date, time, place of event and a number of contact. Submissions should be received by the twentieth day of the preceding month.
Be sure to include a daytime telephone number.

Mail submissions to
*Mississippi Star,* P.O. Box 2651, Bay St. Louis, MS 39521.

*Mississippi Star* reserves the right to refuse or decline to publish any submission.



## MOVING? RECENTLY MOVED? ABOUT TO MOVE?

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# LETTERS

**No Justice**

I was convicted back in 1994 of selling $20.00 worth of crack cocaine to an undercover agent. I was sentenced to 60 years without the chance of parole. Why didn't the judge just give me the death sentence for this non-violent crime? I am very well educated and I gave this country five years of my life in the U.S. Navy, but none of this mattered to the judge. I've never been convicted of a violent crime, and this is my second time being in prison. I read in the Sun Herald just last week where a guy was convicted of kidnapping, assault, and armed robbery and the same judge who sentenced me gave him 25 years with parole. The public should take interest in these unjust issues.

Sincerely,

**Trellis Harvey**
*East Mississippi Correctional Facility*
Meridian, Mississippi

## Tell Us What You Think About MISSISSIPPI *Star*

Express your point of view in a letter.

# Early detection

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**An estimated 165,000 new cases of**
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***Who is at risk?***

Incidence increases with age. Over 80% of all prostate cancers are diagnosed in men over age 65. Rates are 40% higher for black men than white men.

***What do I look for?***

Prostate cancer warnings include:

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- The need to urinate frequently, especially at night
- Blood in the urine
- Painful or burning urination
- Continuing pain in lower back, pelvis or upper thighs

***What should I do?***

Early detection is extremely critical. After 40, a man should have a digital rectal examination with his regular annual physical checkup and an annual prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test at 50 and older. If you are experiencing any of the symptoms described here, contact your physician immediately.

For more information or a physician referral call:
865-DOCS (3627)

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## BOOK REVIEW

# The Best (Two) Four Letter Words in the English Language: Book and Tape!!

*by Herta Smith*

Books and a love of reading are gifts that will last a lifetime. Books can put a child's education and future on solid ground and are the stuff lasting memories are made of. Here are a few new ones that you and your child will love.

***Eyes, Nose, Fingers and Toes: A First Book All About You*** *by Judy Hindley, illustrated in color by Brita Grandstrom (Candlewick Press, 28 pages).*

Read aloud: ages 1 through 3
Read yourself: ages 7 and older

Any toddler will love having this book read to them.

"Arms go reaching way out wide. Arms can rock you side to side. Hands are to hold and pate and clap. Hands you hide behind your back."

Little people will really get excited about their eyes, noses, ears, mouths, lips, legs, fingers, toes and hands. A wonderful book to help you interact with your toddler.

*Once I Was...* by Niki Clark Leopold, illustrated in color by Woodleigh Hubbard (G.P. Putman's Sons, 32 pages).

Changes fascinate us all and this book looks at changes and growth in an interesting way.

"Once I was an alphabet, now I am a book. Once I couldn't feed myself, now I love to cook.

I used to be a napkin, now I am a kite. Once the dark was scary, now I like the night."

We all fear change, and this little book helps our children see how change can be a wonderful thing. The illustrations in this book are gorgeous.

Don't always have time to read to your child? Pick up this tape and pop it in while you are running errands with your child in the car.

*Anansi Time*, written and performed by Bobby Norfolk (August House, 45 minutes).

Ages: 5 and up will really like this tape.

Bobby Norfolk is a gifted storyteller who has traveled extensively in Africa and brings back wonderful stories for us all. Anansi is a spider hero who lives in Africa in the country of Ghana. He is always the underdog but triumphs over all!! There are six stories on this tape ranging in time lengths of three to sixteen minutes. Even the shortest errand warrants a great Anansi story.

*Mississippi Star* welcomes Herta Smith who will be contributing a monthly review of recommended reading for children. Herta resides in Carrollton, Texas.

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ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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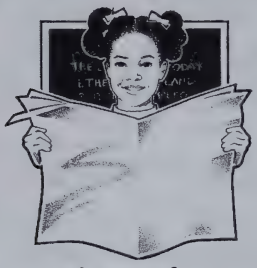

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# "Success for All" Creates Successful Readers

*by Jeanie Lunsford*

*Second-grade teacher Hattie Nettles talks to the students about the conflict elevator. As part of Success for All, the students learn how to resolve conflicts with their peers before they escalate to the top floor. Learning how to control your temper and emotions is a key part of learning readiness.*

Moss Point elementary schools will be creating successful readers through an innovative program this year called Success for All.

"I looked at the assessment on one of our kindergartners toward the end of last year—which was our first year with Success for All—and he tested at the fourth grade reading level," said John Alderman, principal of East Park Elementary School.

Although this was an especially impressive case, according to Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Sara Hardin, many students made rapid strides through the district's new Success for All reading program last year. A nationally recognized, research based supplementary program, Success for All was implemented at East Park, Escatawpa and Kreole elementary schools in the lower grades in 1998-99. This year, both the number of schools and the number of grades using the program has been expanded.

According to Cathy Fulcher, Escatawpa's principal, the teachers in the upper grades at her school were so impressed last year that they began copying some of the SFA techniques and voted to adopt it school-wide in 1999-2000. The other Moss Point Elementary Schools were equally enthusiastic and all decided to implement it this year in all grades. During the summer, teachers, teacher assistants and administrators underwent training in the program to be ready to start when students returned in August.

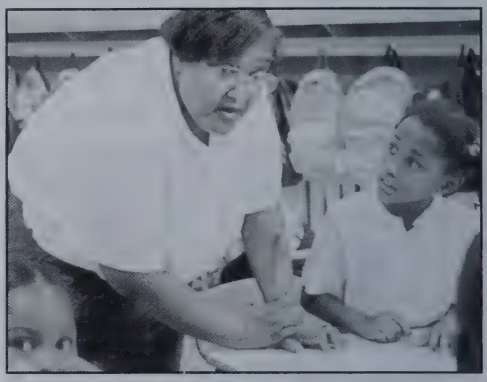
With Success for All, each morning the children move from their regular classrooms to small assigned groups for 90 minutes of uninterrupted reading and language arts classes. The program integrates whole language and phonics, and focuses on team and cooperative learning, innovative lesson plans, continuous assessment and cooperative family involvement.

Every student's reading level is assessed at the beginning of the year and then reassessed every eight weeks. Because this is an individualized learning plan, reassignments can be made throughout the year based on each student's individual development.

"Every child will be able to learn at

his/her own pace without being frustrated by traditional grade-level barriers," said Hardin. "We don't want children to be held back or upset because they can't catch up. SFA guarantees that we stay on top of every individual child's progress and that we actively work to remove any obstacle that stands in a student's way."

"I think the fact that kids are tested every eight weeks is one of the best things about the program," concurs Alderman. "This way, all children are placed where they are comfortable, but challenged, so they never feel like 'I can't.' Each day, music begins to play, the students get 'on the train' and walk through the school to their small reading groups. They don't know who the higher or lower groups are; they just know that they are having fun, learning to love reading and making progress."



*Teacher Imogene Haynes and student Markia Nix brainstorm with other students about a team name for their reading group. Team building is an integral part of this cooperative learning method.*

Kim Alda, the SFA facilitator at East Park Elementary, says, "I love the program. No one comes in now believing they can't read. The testing is a positive experience because they all believe they can do it and having that confidence is wonderful. They are successful, and they feel successful."

Alda compared the number of East Park students who were reading below grade level when they entered second grade in 1998 with those who entered in 1999 after a full year of Success for All. The number of students beginning the year below grade level has been reduced by two-thirds at East Park.

Alderman says that SFA's unique approach to tutoring is one of the things that makes it special. "Some of our parents were shocked to discover that their first graders might be tutored," said Alderman. "But you have to do a paradigm shift when thinking about tutoring. With SFA, we look at any student that is having any difficulty, and we use short-term intensive tutoring to bring them up to speed in that particular area. We address the specific problem and then get the student right back into the reading team."

"Every child is equally capable of learning," said Alderman. "But some come in with less preparation for reading, especially if their parents aren't big readers. We try to get everyone on an equal playing field as quickly as possible."

Educators in general agree that some learning roadblocks are medical, social or psychological. SFA schools each have a Family Support Team, made up of teachers, administrators, counselors, nurses and social workers. If a child is not making progress, this group immediately meets with the parents to determine what the need is and tries to provide any appropriate support.

Unlike some intensive reading programs, SFA is designed to benefit gifted students as well as those that are struggling. According to parent Donna Mauldin, her son tested well above his grade level, as did

***Continued on page 18...***

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## OPINION POLL

# How do we keep our schools sa

"For the safety of our children, parents can help by teaching their children to respect school rules and to know that these rules are in place for the safety and well-being of all children. If a child starts to show signs of a changing personality such as always complaining about 'being picked on,' uncontrolled anger, impulsiveness, or withdrawal, talk with the school counselor or the principal about the changes you notice and what steps can be taken to help the student. Teach children to respect themselves and others. Encourage children to talk about things that may be bothering them. We try to make adult visibility on our campus as prevalent as possible because this provides support and protection to our children."

**Lettie E. Burger**, *Principal*
Pass Christian Elementary School

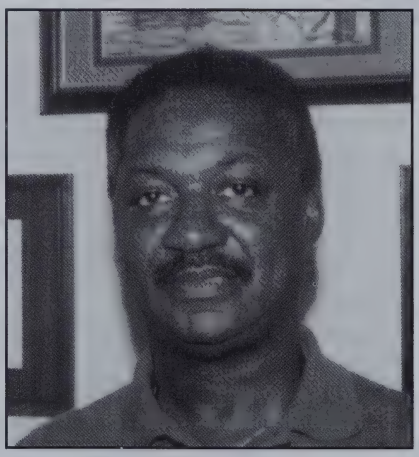
"Schools must have open lines of communication with parents and the community. Parents must be involved in the lives of their children. Teachers are here to teach. They are acting parents at the school, but their number one priority is to provide students with the best education possible. When a student is not on task, it interferes with the teaching-learning process. When a teacher has to discipline one student all students are affected. When parents are involved in the teaching-learning process, children are better students, and teachers are better able to do what they do best – teach."

**Nathaniel Fairconnetue**, *Assistant Principal*
Harrison Central High School

# nd productive learning centers?

"The safety of the kids is our number one priority. We have to have the kids in the position of feeling safe if we are going to educate them. Our school is secure. We have taken measures to make sure our schools are safe and secure. Gulfport School District and Harrison County School District jointly hired a security officer. He is working with the principals to make sure that all schools in Gulfport are safe. He gives suggestions for safety measures and identify weak areas and assists with making corrections."

**Dr. Barbara Thomas**, *Principal*
28th St. Elementary School (Gulfport)



"I think that metal detectors and video cameras are instruments that provide certain amounts of safety, but prisons have metal detectors and cameras. And I would be willing to bet that all prisoners don't feel safe. I think that providing a secure and safe environment is in the minds of children. We have to make them feel safe. We have to provide a nurturing, caring environment so that if someone has a weapon, students won't be afraid to report that kind of information to the adults. That will take a total school effort, from the janitors to cafeteria workers to the principal of the school. We all have to do our part to create that nurturing and caring environment because children are the best judges of character."

**C.L. Luckett**, *Principal*
Central Middle School (Gulfport)

*"Reading" from page 14...*

many of the other students. If the student was in third grade, but tested at a sixth, seventh or eighth-grade reading level, the teacher helped him or her move forward from that higher level, according to Mauldin. By allowing advanced students to move as quickly ahead as they could, no one got bored or frustrated.

"I observed the class and they had a lot of concepts that I think would be beneficial for every child," said Mauldin. "You can ask any SFA student: 'What makes a superior and meaningful sentence, and they can tell you. There are adults who can't do that."

Fulcher examined every student's assessment at the end of last year and discovered that 840 out of 844 of her students had made progress; (the four that had not had health problems during the year). "Although we know there is no one perfect solution that works for every child, the numbers speak for themselves," said Fulcher.

Fulcher says that part of the success of the program lies in home-school partnerships. "Parents understand that the reading program comes first," said Fulcher. "Parents have been very supportive—arranging doctor and dental appointments around this time. And the school puts it first; if a school event or field day is planned, it has to be scheduled around the reading time."

Family support is a critical part of the program, because each student must read for at least 20 minutes each night with a family member. Parents are encouraged to come in for regularly scheduled observation days in order to gauge their children's progress.

Success for All takes an integrated, far-seeing approach to reading. "One part of the curriculum we think parents will especially appreciate is the "Getting Along Together" segment, designed to help ensure reading readiness," said Fulcher. During the first two weeks of school while reading levels are being assessed, children learn how to create a peaceful, calm and cooperative atmosphere in order to make learning easier. The "Getting Along Together" curriculum helps students learn how to become effective listeners and how to deal with their own emotions in a positive way. Students are taught how to recognize and deal with their own anger appropriately, and how to resolve conflicts with others peacefully. "By creating a more comfortable emotional environment, students can contribute to their own success," said Fulcher.

Because this program provides a new, integrated method of teaching, all participating educators have to receive intensive training. Teachers and teacher assistants also work with a school facilitator and the principal whose task it is to ensure that the program is working well for every student. In addition, Success for All experts will visit the schools three times a year to assess progress and to provide support to teachers as they implement this new way of teaching reading.

To help pay for this training, Hardin and the curriculum & instruction team wrote a Comprehensive School Reform Demonstrative (CSRD) grant that will bring in $150,000 over the next three years and a Goals 2000 grant that will provide $100,000 this year.

"Special supplementary programs are a key part of our effort to move toward a Level 5 accreditation standard," said Hardin. "This kind of aggressive approach to school improvement is not covered by state funding, so we've spent a lot of effort this year to gain alternative funding to support the programs we believe will benefit our children."

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# A Family of Educators

*by Maurice E. Singleton, Jr.*

*Siblings Ms. Ella Broome, Dr.Louis Hall and Mrs. Verna Walker enjoy careers as educators.*

*Sister Shirley Brown has operates Shirley's Daycare in Pass Christian.*

Ms. Ella Broome knew what she wanted to be since the time she was in elementary school. And so did her six siblings. Their parents, Simuel and Armenta Hall viewed teaching as a very honorable profession and they encouraged their children to pursue careers in education. Though neither parent graduated from high school, all seven of their children attended college.

Today, three of the siblings teach in the Pass Christian Public School District. Ms. Broome is an early intervention teacher at Pass Christian Elementary School. Her sister, Mrs. Verna Walker teaches fourth grade science and social studies there also. A brother, Dr. Louis Hall teaches science classes and is an assistant football coach at Pass Christian High School.

The eldest of the siblings, Shirley Brown operates a daycare center for infants in Pass Christian. Anderson Hall is a police officer in Long Beach, and his career also has involvement with school children, as he is the *D.A.R.E* Officer for the Long Beach Public School District. Belinda Murphy is a former teacher who now works in the telecommunications industry in Florida. Their other

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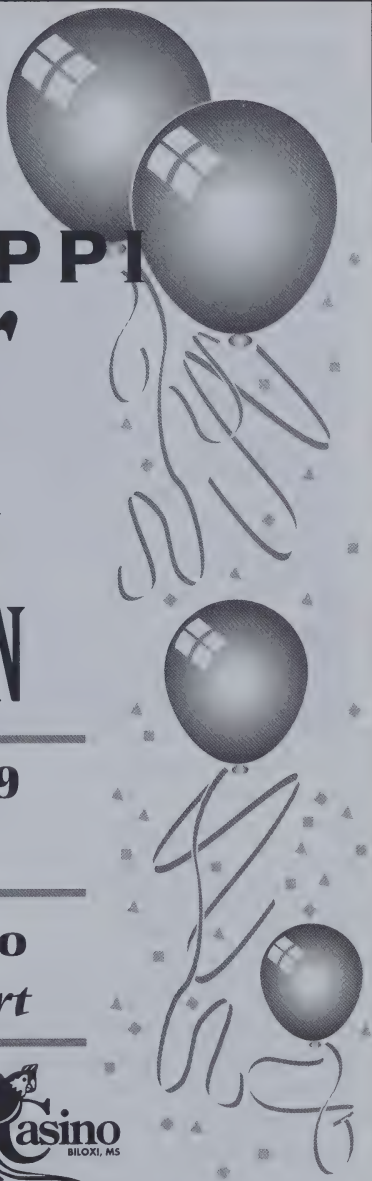

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brother, Simuel Hall, Jr. is deceased.

"Our parents were sticklers for education," explained Mrs. Walker. "Education and religion were more important than anything to them. All of us enrolled in college."

Mrs. Walker has been teaching school for thirty-three years. She said that the profession is quite different now than it was when she first started teaching, but she said the reward factor is still there.

"You still see that glow when they learn something new. Since I am teaching science, the students are quite enthused by the science projects they are doing now."

Mrs. Walker holds a bachelor's degree in education from Alcorn State University and a master's degree from the University of Indiana in Gary, Indiana.

Dr. Louis Hall returned to teaching last year after a sixteen-year corporate career. Returning to the classroom to teach, he says, was never a goal; however, it is now a decision of which he is now extremely proud.

"I wish I had done it years ago," said Dr. Hall. "Of all the jobs I've had, teaching has been the most rewarding. Seeing the kids succeed – that's a real motivator for me. That makes me feel like I make a contribution to society."

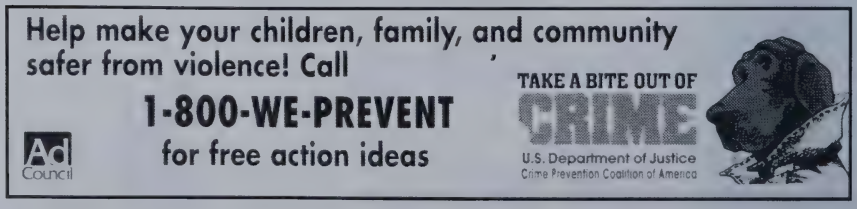
Mrs. Brown is the eldest of the siblings. Like most of her other siblings, her career is centered around the development of the young people. She operates a daycare center for infants in Pass Christian.

"I am not required to teach," she explains. "But I do. We focus on their social development and mental development. That's what we do."

In addition to one child of her own, Mrs. Brown and her husband, John E. Brown adopted four children. They also found joy in providing a home for children whose parents could not provide for them. Over the course of their marriage, they have taken twenty-four young people for periods of one month to a year and a half.

Ms. Broome recently began her second year at Pass Christian Elementary. She is also working on a dissertation to complete her doctorate in secondary administration. She holds a bachelor's degree in education from Alcorn State University and a master's degree from the University of Southern Mississippi.

Ms. Broome recalled the role her parents played, inspiring their children to succeed. "They worked hard. Mother was a custodian in the district for almost thirty years. We learned to value people. We appreciate our parents. They would be very proud of all of their children as we are very proud of them."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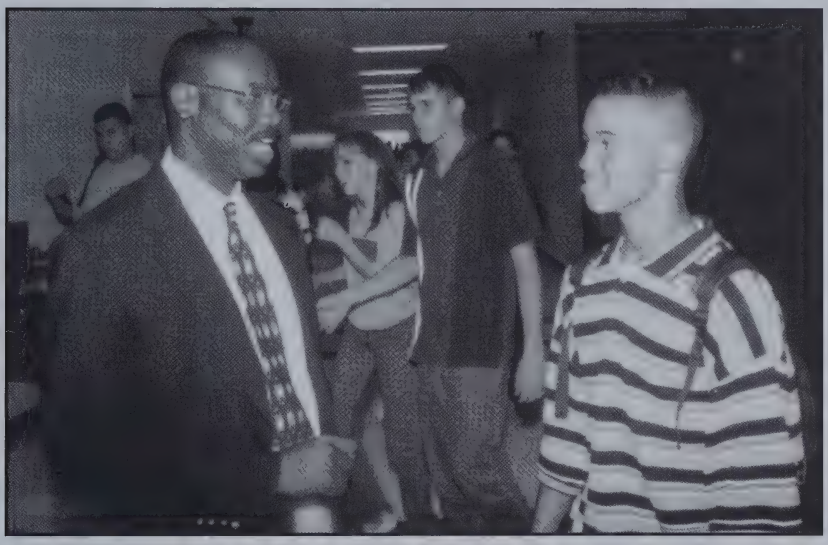
# Creating the Capacity for Success at Pass Christian Public Schools

*by Maurice E. Singleton, Jr.*



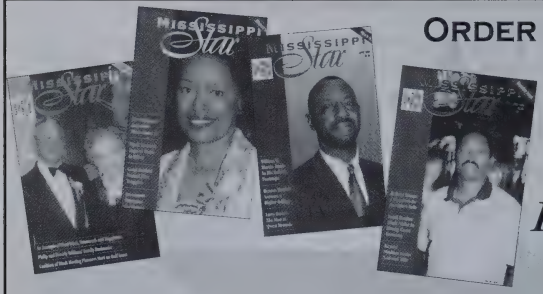
*Superintendent Philip Terrell, Ph.D. asks student about his transition to new high school.*

Pass Christian High School began the 1999-2000 school year in a brand new, state of the art facility on North Street. The approximately 85,000 square feet of classrooms, cafeteria, gymnasium-auditorium and offices was the result of a $10.1 million bond issue that was first proposed to the citizens of Pass Christian in 1997. Two years later, even with a construction slowdown due to *Hurricane Georges*, the new high school opened on schedule on August 6.

Amidst anticipated confusion of students trying to find their classrooms on the first day at a brand new school and with media representatives on hand to report the first day's activities, it was quite apparent to any observer who the real beneficiaries of this remarkable new facility are.

A television producer asked Pass Christian Public School District Superintendent Dr. Philip Terrell if he would walk up the stairs to create a certain effect for footage to be aired on the evening news. Without missing a beat, Dr. Terrell told him to "hold on." He exited the foyer and returned in seconds with a smiling student.

"I've got just the right person for you," he said to the television producer. "Just let him know what you need



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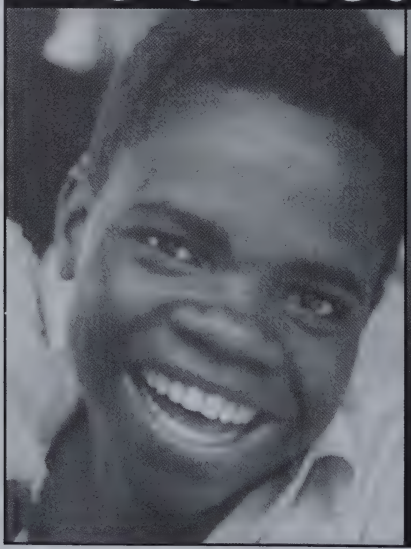
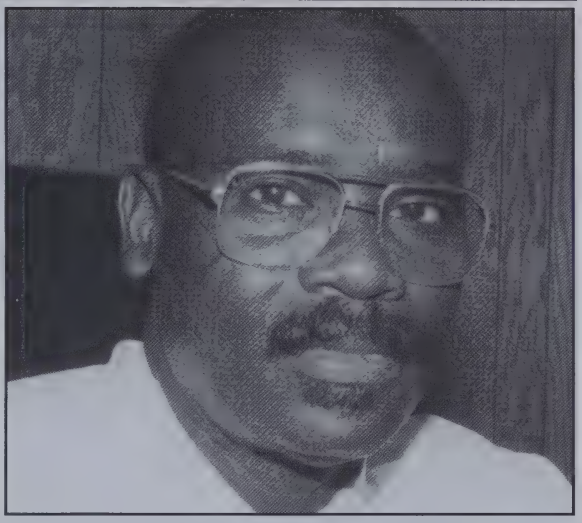


## Don't Get Wasted On Drugs.

him to do."

The look on the producer's face as he turned toward Dr. Terrell appeared to say: "But we wanted you to be in the story." Behind a smile enhanced by the pleasure of having one of his students participate in a television news story, Dr. Terrell appeared almost oblivious to the television producer's pleading stare. But he was aware. He knew exactly what he was doing. He knew that the experience was good for the student.



*Philip Terrell, Ph.D. anticipates a Level 5.0 accreditation for Pass Christian Public Schools.*

"I have a strong desire to see every child that I come in contact with succeed in life and eventually contribute to society," Dr. Terrell explained. "It's obvious to me that the best chance of success starts with a strong educational background."

A strong educational background is a mission that Dr. Terrell has for each of the 1750 students enrolled in Pass Christian Public Schools. And according to the most recent accreditation level rating, the district is doing just that. Pass Christian Public School District scored a 4.7 rating out of a possible score of five.

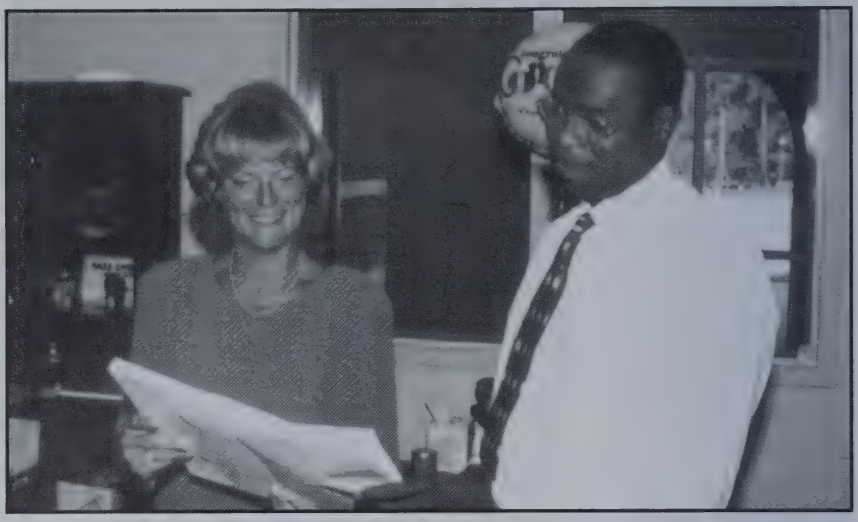
Dr. Terrell said that a 5.0 accreditation is "one specific goal" he has for Pass Christian Public Schools.

"The accreditation level of 5.0 has seemed to allude Pass Christian," he explained. "But we certainly have the potential."

In fact, Pass Christian Public School District has improved on its preceding year score during each of the past four years, earning a 4.3 in 1998, a 4.1 in 1997 and a 3.8 in 1996. A 5.0 may just be on the horizon.

Taking into consideration the district's academic momentum over the past four years, the commitment on the part of teachers throughout the district, bright new structures that seem to stimulate good study habits and growing community pride, it appears that the necessary components are in place for the top rating in 2000.

"We certainly have the potential," Dr. Terrell explained as he began to assess the prospects of attaining the top rating level. "The building itself makes children want to learn. It makes students more inquisitive. For the individual child or the children it's



*Pass High Principal Mrs. Cathy Broadway and Dr. Terrell*

like a gigantic gift presented by the community.

"They are the first ones to come in. It's been sixty-three years. They are the first generation to occupy this building. I think the individual child spending their sophomore year in a building that was built in the 1930's and then at the end of the summer getting off a school bus and entering a building that was built in the late 1990's is a very positive shock."

Shock may be a good way to describe the accumulation of accomplishment that has occurred throughout the district in Dr. Terrell's seven years as superintendent of Pass Christian Public School District. However, those who know his commitment to youth are not surprised or shocked.

"Dr. Terrell is an asset to whatever endeavor he becomes part of," said Dwight Evans, President and CEO of Mississippi Power, who has worked closely with Dr. Terrell who is a member of Mississippi Power Company's Board of Directors. "His passion for molding youth is evident and he's willing to put action to desire. Very capable, dedicated man. I'm glad to have him as part of our team."

*"Team" approach* may be the best way to describe the success of Pass Christian Public Schools over the course of Dr. Terrell's tenure as superintendent. Dr. Terrell is a team player whose mission is always the good of the team. In this case, the good of the team is the development of youth. And, the team is winning.

"There are people in life who just show up with passion for doing good things for kids," added Mr. Evans. "Philip Terrell is one of those people. He's an asset to the Coast."

# So You Want To Be A Juror...

*by Judge John Whitfield*

Jury service is one of the most important obligations bestowed upon any citizen. Jury service is a duty and responsibility of every citizen. It offers everyone, duly qualified to serve as a juror, an opportunity to resolve disputes between the State and a fellow citizen in criminal matters and between private individuals in civil actions. The American system of justice would fail if good upstanding and responsible citizens refused to honor their civic duty and participate in the judicial system as jurors.

Article 3, Section 31 of the Mississippi Constitution and the Sixth and Seventh Amendments to the Constitution of the United States of America guarantee one's right to a jury trial. This right means nothing if those chosen to serve as jurors do not take their duty seriously. To qualify for jury service, citizens must meet certain basic requirements. Jurors must be registered voters in the county in which they are called for jury duty and/or they must own real property within the county wherein the trial court is located. Jurors must be at least 21 years of age and be able to read and write to some degree. If a citizen has been convicted of the unlawful sale of intoxicating liquor within the preceding five years of their jury service, they are disqualified for jury service. Furthermore, a citizen cannot serve if he or she is a convicted felon, a habitual drunkard or a common gambler. Finally, a citizen cannot serve as a juror on a case of which the potential juror is a party to the litigation. Although one may want to serve on his or her own jury, this would create a serious conflict of interest.

Once qualified, citizens may be excused from jury service if there is a valid reason justifying such excuse. Mere inconvenience is not a valid excuse. Generally, a citizen may be excused from jury service if one's employer, or where a citizen has actually served on a jury within the preceding two years of their present service. Additionally, if a citizen is over the age of 65, or if their presence is required at home due to illness or a medical emergency, then they may be excused from jury service.

Ultimately, the decision to excuse a citizen who is called for jury duty is up to the presiding judge. Courts try to be reasonable in considering possible excuses. However, the serious business of justice requires that Judges be ever mindful of their ultimate responsibility to insure the proper administration of justice to every citizen who seeks the same within the confines of the judicial system. Justice must be the aim of everyone who plays a role in the criminal or civil judicial systems.

This is true of the Judges and the lawyers. It is equally true of those chosen to serve as jurors.

Contrary to what some may believe, jurors are compensated for their service. In Mississippi, jurors receive twenty-five dollars per day, and mileage. This may not seem like a lot when compared to one's daily salary. However, it is fifteen dollars more per day than the state of California paid the members of the O.J. Simpson trial. California residents only receive ten dollars per day for jury service.

Once all of the citizens who are called for jury duty are qualified, the actual jury selection process begins. This process is known as Voir Dire – which means to speak the truth. During this phase of the trial, the court and the attorneys may question potential jurors to determine if they are qualified to hear the specific case that is set for trial. These questions are necessary to insure each party a fair and impartial jury free from bias and prejudice so far as humanly possible. Should a question elicit an answer that is embarrassing for a potential juror to make aloud or if a potential juror feels that the answer may embarrass someone who lives in the community, the potential juror should ask permission to approach the Judge's bench and respond in private. No one – especially the Judge – wants to unduly burden anyone summoned for jury duty.

Once Voir Dire is complete, twelve jurors will be selected to hear the specific case. Additionally, one or two alternate jurors will be chosen. The alternatives will serve in the event a regular member of the jury becomes ill or is otherwise unable to complete his or her service. Let the trial begin.

So you want to be a juror? You are to be commended for such an attitude. Your compassion and dedication to your community are exemplary and serves as an example for all to follow. Share your expectations with others. Become an ambassador for the judicial system. Encourage your family, friends, and coworkers to serve willingly. Ultimately, the service you give will be the service you receive should you ever seek refuge in the judicial system.

*Judge John Whitfield serves as a Circuit Court Judge for Hancock, Harrison and Stone Counties in Mississippi. Nothing contained within this article is offered as legal advice. For legal advice, individuals should consult an attorney.*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# NINTH ANNUAL BLUES FESTIVAL
## *Scheduled for September 11, 1999*

Clarence Carter, Mel Waiters, Lattimore and J. Blackfoot headline a list of entertainers for the Ninth Annual Mississippi Gulf Coast Blues and Heritage Festival scheduled for September 11 at the Jackson County Fairgrounds in Pascagoula.

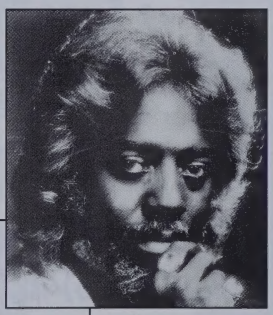
"We intend our festival to be a family affair, attractive and acceptable to children," said Samuel Walley, president of the Blues Commission. "Our artists are requested not to distort a blues musical presentation with vulgarity of our times, not just out of respect for our family-oriented audience, but also because our research of the old recordings and original blues, there is a total absence of vulgarity and simply a unique musical recitation of pain and anguish, hope and pathos – love lost or love gained, often tempered respectfully with humor and comedy."

The Blues Commission has two principal goals: 1) to give an annual blues festival in September and to use the profits to help youth residing in Mississippi Coastal counties; and 2) to promote the blues as an art form and to make an historic statement that we can work together to ensure the preservation of an important Southern heritage.

Tickets for this year's festival are $15 in advance (purchased by August 31, 1999) at Brother John's Shop in Biloxi, Byrd's Music Store in Moss Point, Taylor-Harris Drug Store in Gulfport, JJ's Music Mart in Hattiesburg and Computer Graphic Designs in Pascagoula.

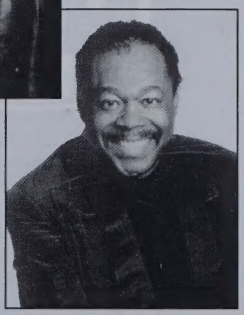
Gates open at 11:00 a.m. on the day of the show.

*Clarence Carter*



*Lattimore*

*Mel Waiters*



*J Blackfoot*

# Calendar

## NAACP Regularly Monthly Meetings

### Hancock County Branch
2nd Tuesday
Valena C. Jones Methodist Church

### Gulfport Branch
1st Monday
Isiah Fredericks
Community Center

### Biloxi Branch
4th Thursday
Branch Office - Main Street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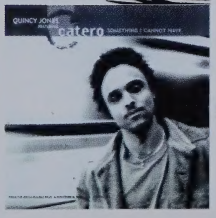


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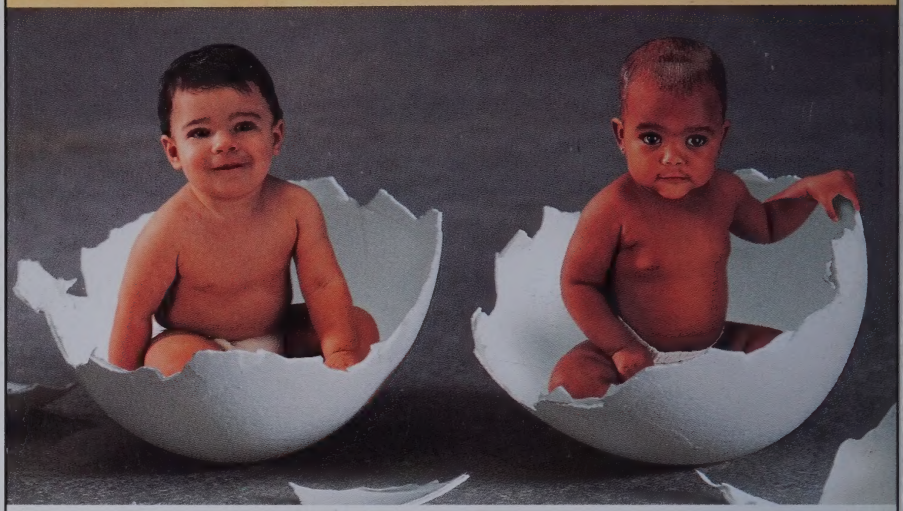

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